NOVELTY FIGURINE AND CARABINER STORAGE ASSEMBLY

Field Of The Invention

The invention relates generally to novelty figurines bearing the portrait or resemblance of a person and a carabiner-type attachment device therefore, wherein the carabiner-type attachment device has a storage compartment.

Background Of The Invention

Toys and figurines have long been around bearing the portrait or resemblance of a person; usually of a famous person. It has even been a recent craze to use what has come to be known as a "bobble head" toy to bear the likeness of a famous sports figure.

In addition, carabiners have long been in use for providing a means for attaching articles to each other. Such devices have numerous applications, such as for example enabling articles to be quickly and easily secured to a backpack, purse, handbag, key chain, belt loop, utility belt, or the like. United States Patent No. 5,005,266 discloses a typical carabiner-type attachment device.

It is also known to combine carabiners with other known useful items, as, for example, is disclosed in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,270,909, 6,223,372 and 6,527,434 , U.S. Design Patent Nos. D459,338 and D469,023 and at the following websites www.fiskars.com, www.demstore.com, www.branders.com, www.advantageindustries.com and www.promoplace.com).

Such prior art devices, while useful in their own right for achieving their specific purposes, do not have the added benefit of incorporating a novelty toy item (the figurine) in a construction that allows the item to be easily, and safely, carried around by its owner/user on essentially any type of item, including any type of garment or bag. Further, none of these prior art devices comprise a way of allowing the owner/user of the novelty item to carry small objects therein, as, for example, candy or gum. It would therefore be desirable to provide such a novelty item preferably having a collectible figurine thereon. A further advantage of the subject invention would be to construct the item with a storage compartment for storage of items by the user.

Summary Of The Invention

In accordance with the invention, a novelty figurine and carabiner storage assembly is provided. The figurine comprises a head portion, a body portion located proximate to the head portion, and at least one carabiner attachment assembly extending from the body portion for selectively allowing the figurine to be attached to or removed from another item able to receive the attachment assembly. The carabiner attachment assembly comprises at least first and second leg assemblies, with one of the leg assemblies having a selectively openable gate assembly extending therealong. The body portion has at least one substantially hollow interior section and at least one selectively openable door assembly for access into the substantially hollow interior section.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an improved novelty figurine.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an improved novelty figurine having a carabiner-type attaching mechanism.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide an improved novelty figurine having a substantially hollow interior section and a selectively openable door assembly to allow for access into the interior section.

Still a further object of the present invention is to provide an improved novelty figurine which is able stand in an upright orientation.

Yet a further object of the present invention is to provide an improved novelty figurine wherein the head portion is attached by a spring assembly, allowing the head portion to act as a "bobble-head" figurine.

Other objects of the invention will in part be obvious and will in part be apparent from the following description.

The invention accordingly comprises assemblies possessing the features, properties and the relation of components which will be exemplified in the products hereinafter described, and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

Brief Description Of The Drawings

For a fuller understanding of the invention, reference is made to the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a first embodiment of the novelty figurine;

FIG. 2 is a side elevational view of the novelty figurine of Fig. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of another embodiment of the novelty figurine;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view along line A-A of Fig. 3;

FIG. 5 is a view along line B-B of Fig. 3;

FIG. 6 is a side elevational view of the novelty figurine of Fig. 3, showing the door assembly in its open condition;

FIG. 7 is a side elevational view of still another embodiment of the novelty figurine;

FIG. 8 is a side elevational view of yet another embodiment of the novelty figurine;

FIG. 9 is a side elevational view of a further embodiment of the novelty figurine;

FIG. 10 is a side elevational view of still a further embodiment of the novelty figurine; and

FIG. 11 is back side elevational view of the novelty figurine of Fig. 10.

Detailed Description Of The Preferred Embodiments

In the following description, for purposes of explanation, specific numbers, materials and configurations are set forth in order to provide a better understanding of the invention. It will be apparent, however, to one having ordinary skill in the art that the invention may be practiced without these specific details. In some instances, well-known features may be omitted or simplified so as not to obscure the present invention. Furthermore, reference in the specification to "one embodiment" or "an embodiment" means that a particular feature, structure or characteristic described in connection with the embodiment is included in at least one embodiment of the invention. The appearances of the phrase "in one embodiment," if any, in various places in the specification are not necessarily all referring to the same embodiment.

As seen in Figs. 1 and 2, novelty figurine **100** has a head portion **200** and a body portion **300**. Head portion **200** will normally consist of a facial portrait of a well known person, such as a sports figure. If, for example, the portrait is of a well known baseball player, head portion **200** will bear a baseball helmet/hat, seen in Figs. 1 and 2

as **210**. As the ballplayer will be known to be from a certain team, the particular team's insignia can be found on the helmet/hat **210** (not shown).

In the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2, head portion **200** is attached in and around chin/neck section **220** to a portion of body portion **300** in any known manner of connecting plastic elements together.

In a preferred embodiment, body portion **300** has an openable door assembly **310**, which assembly is openable around a hinge **320**. Skipping forward quickly to Fig. 6, the manner of rotation of door assembly **310** around hinge **320** is shown. Turning to Figs. 3 and 4, the substantially hollow interior of body portion **300**, including door assembly **310**, is shown at **410**. Turning back now to Figs. 1 and 2, and the preferred embodiment, with head portion **200** attached at chin/neck section **220** to door assembly **310**, door assembly **310** is opened around hinge **320** by unclipping of head portion **200** from body portion **300**.

The best embodiment to see the clipping mechanism for head portion **200** is seen in figurine 400 of Figs. 3 and 5 at **420**. In particular, as seen in Fig. 5, clipping assembly **420** has clipping arms **430** and **432** defining a clipping space **438** therebetween. In practice, in order to secure head portion **200** to the uppermost section **440** of body portion **402**, head portion **406** is simply pushed against uppermost portion **440** of body portion **402** so that portion **440** is received against clipping space **438**. Once enough force is applied, clipping arms **430** and **432** will separate even further, allowing them to slide around the outsides of portion **440** until clipping arms **430** and **432** are received totally around portion **440** so that clipping space **438** goes back to its at rest position. In its at rest position, clipping space **438** is narrower than the thickness of portion **440** so that head portion **406** does not, too easily, disengage from its secured position around portion **440**. However, clipping space **438** is not so small as to make it difficult for selective removal of head portion **406** from around portion **440**.

In the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2, where head portion **200** is attached to body portion **300** at chin/neck section **220**, when head portion **200** is removed from portion **440** by the disengaging of clip assembly **420**, not only is head portion **200** removed from contact with body portion **300**, but door assembly **310** is pivoted around hinge **320** so as to open door assembly **310**.

Turning back to the embodiment of Figs. 3-6, while in the preferred embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2 the head portion is attached to the body portion so that the door assembly and the head portion move as one unit, it is seen in the embodiment of Figs. 3 – 6 that it is possible for door assembly **450** to not be attached to head portion **406**, such that door assembly **450** may pivot around hinge **460** independently of head portion **406**. In this alternate embodiment of the preferred embodiment, a securing mechanism is found at an uppermost portion of door assembly **450**, see Fig. 6. This securing mechanism will have a portion thereof secured to body portion **402**, while another portion thereof is secured within door assembly **450**. The portion extending from body portion **402** is found at **454**, while the portion on door assembly **450** is seen at **456** of Fig. 6. Assemblies **454** and **456** can be as simple as male and female clip assemblies, or any other known manner of allowing for clipping security while also allowing for ease of unclipping of two elements together. It is believed that this type of mechanism is well known in the art.

Turning to Figs. 7 – 11, additional alternate embodiments of the invention are shown. In particular, in Fig. 7, novelty figurine **500** has a smaller door assembly **510** than the one shown in the embodiments of Figs. 1 – 6. In this way, door assembly **510** will not have a hollow interior for receipt therein of items (such as candy), but the entire hollow interior will be found within the main body portion **520**. In this embodiment door assembly **510** pivots around hinge assembly **530**.

Regarding the embodiment of Fig. 8, two things of import are noted: (1) head portion **610** of figurine **600** is attached to clip assembly **620**, and therefore body portion **630**, through use of a spring **640**; and (2) there is no door assembly. Spring **640** gives head portion **610** the ability to be a "bobble-head" construction.

Figurine **700** of Fig. 9 shows an alternate embodiment for support structure **710**. In particular, as will be discussed in more detail below, in the embodiments of Figs. 1 – 8, the support structure of the novelty figurine is dependant upon both a lowermost portion of the body portion of the item and the feet extending therefrom. In the embodiment of Fig. 9, support structure **710** consists solely of feet **720**, no reliance on the bottom most portion of body portion **730** is required. In this embodiment door assembly **740** pivots around hinge assembly **750**.

Figs. 10 and 11 show yet another embodiment of the invention, wherein a 3-dimensional facial portrait of a person protrudes from a receiving surface **810** of figurine **800**.

Turning in general to a discussion of the various hinge assemblies of the body sections of the embodiments, attention is directed to Fig. 4. There, hinge 460 is shown to consist of element 460A and 460B, which are dowel-like elements extending through holes in body portion 402 into the hollow interior 410. Elements 406A and B are part of door assembly 450. It is, however, understood that any known manner of constructing a hinge assembly, or other known manner of pivoting a door such as that found herein, is anticipated in the invention.

Tying all of the figures and embodiments together, it is to be noted that different elements of different embodiments are not meant to be restricted to the particular embodiments in which they are shown and discussed, but may be interchanged with other elements from other of the figures/embodiments. In particular, while the clipping assembly for **200** is not shown for the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2, it is to be understood that such a clipping assembly as is found in the embodiment of Figs. 3 – 6 can be found behind head portion **200** of Figs. 1 and 2, so that head portion **200** and door assembly **310** may be pivoted downwards around hinge **320** to allow access to the interior chamber thereof. In addition, the smaller door assembly **510** of Fig. 7 can be incorporated into any of the embodiments shown in the other figures having a door assembly. Even further, support structure **710** having only feet **720** as shown in Fig. 9 can also be associated with any of the embodiments. This is also true of the "bobble-head" structure shown in Fig. 8, and the hinge structure shown in Fig. 4.

It is also to be understood that in those embodiments where the head portion is not attached to the body portion, as it is in Figs. 1 and 2, different head portions from different figure assemblies can be interchanged. In particular, the invention anticipates that a baseball fan could have a collection of these novelty figurines, and if they are of the embodiment where the door assembly is separate from the head portion, the different player's heads can be interchanged from assembly to assembly using clip assembly **420**.

Turning now to a discussion of the support mechanism for the various embodiments, as has been earlier mentioned, the support structure for the

embodiments of Figs. 1 – 8 is slightly different from that of the support structure shown in Fig. 9. Figs. 1 – 8 the support structure comprises use of both the lowermost portion of the body portion of the assembly and a foot-structure. In particular, directing attention to the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2, the support structure comprises using the substantially lowermost portion **330** of body member **300** and the leg and feet assembly **340**. As seen if Fig. 1, in the front elevational view, with leg/feet assembly **340**, head portion **200** and a body portion **350**, a full figurine is created, even having arms **360** and hands **370** along with a baseball glove **380**, should the figurine be of a baseball player.

Finally turning to a discussion of the carabiner assembly of the invention, as seen in all of the embodiments, the novelty figurine has a carabiner assembly. Turning to Fig. 6, it is seen that carabiner assembly **900** has in the preferred embodiment a first leg **910**, a second leg **920** and a third leg **930**. Leg **910** has a gate assembly **940** extending therealong. Two embodiments of gate assembly **940** exists. The one shown in Figs. 1 –9 and the one shown in Figs. 10 and 11. As is known of the typical carabiner gate assembly, the gate is selectively openable and automatically closes upon release thereof. In the embodiments of the gate shown if Figs. 1 – 9, gate **950** pivots around hinge **960** and a bias spring assembly (not shown) forces gate **950** to the closed position of Fig. 6 upon removal of any force bearing against gate **950**. For the gate embodiment of Figs. 10 and 11, gate **950** is made of a resilient material, such as but not limited to rubber, plastic, or any other suitable material as is well known in the art. A first end **952** of gate **950** extends out from body **820**. A second end **954** of gate **950** contacts, or is in close proximity to, another end of first let **910**, which portion is in contact with leg **930**. In this embodiment, a resilient attachment device is formed without a pivoting hinge. Gate **950** simply deforms when pressure is applied so as to place gate **950** in an open position, and resiliency returns it to its original closed position when the pressure is released.

It will thus be seen that the objects set forth above, among those made apparent from the preceding description, are efficiently attained, and since certain changes may be made in the above constructions without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description and shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all of the generic and specific features of the invention herein described and all statements of the scope of the invention, which, as a matter of language, might be said to fall therebetween.